

dangerous journey and perhaps dying in the process.

I have been in Brooks County, which is where the Falfurrias checkpoint is. What happens is the smugglers smuggle people across the border, they put them in stash houses, and then periodically they will get them in some vehicle and travel up the highway. But that is why we have Border Patrol checkpoints about 50, 60 miles inland. But what will happen is the smugglers will tell the migrants: Get out of the car and meet me on the north side of this checkpoint.

And maybe, if they are lucky, they will get an old milk carton full of water and maybe a power bar, something to sustain them. But I have seen the bleached bones of migrants who have been left behind and simply died in the process, and recognizing the extreme temperatures that exist, particularly at times like this in places like Texas, it is no surprise that a number of these migrants don't make it.

Well, our Border Patrol is simply the frontline in our law enforcement efforts along the border; but due to the failed policies of the Biden administration, the Border Patrol is unable to do the job that they swore to do, which is to defend and protect our borders, because they are simply overwhelmed by the number of people coming across.

Last month, the Rio Grande Valley Sector agents arrested 10 MS-13 members, one of the most violent gangs in the world, and 2 other gang members within a 4-day span—12 gang members in 4 days. And that was in just one of 20 Border Patrol sectors. Since October, the Border Patrol has arrested more than 450 gang members, and we have already surpassed the total for the entire previous year.

And the scary thing is, these are just the ones who were caught, because we know, with the volume of people coming across, there are what the Border Patrol calls the get-aways, and they estimate that as many as 300,000 more people are getting across the border unbeknownst to the Border Patrol because they are simply preoccupied with these huge numbers, and they get away into the interior of the country.

And once they get across the border, particularly if they are people who have an intention to do harm and commit crime in the United States, they will end up in Boston, Sacramento, Detroit, Miami, or any other city in the United States.

Somebody said: Well, every city is a border city now, and, for all practical purposes, that is true. Folks who live thousands of miles from the border can't write this off as a problem for somewhere else. This is a national problem. Gangs and cartels are sending their henchmen to our cities and our communities. They are trafficking in fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, and other deadly drugs, along with guns and human trafficking.

They are what one person called years ago commodity agnostic. In

other words, they are in it for the money. They don't care how they make the money. They don't care about the people. They are just in it for the money. And in doing so, they are ushering in crime and violence and creating unsafe communities all across our country.

This administration has ignored the crisis at our southern border in an effort to appease open-border members of their political party. They have created a gateway for cartel and gang members to come into our country and wreak havoc on our communities.

Criminal organizations are very sophisticated. Their business model is to overwhelm our capacity to stop them and to make that buck by selling people drugs or other contraband in the communities all across our country. So the situation at the border is not simply about immigration. It is about security. It is about public safety. It is about knowing who is crossing the border and coming to live in your community.

So I am eager to get back home to the Rio Grande Valley to talk to some of these women who are doing heroic work on the frontlines of this crisis, who are getting no help from the Biden administration.

As I said, I wish President Biden would come to the border. We would welcome him and show him what we have learned ourselves from our frequent trips there. Maybe if the President saw and learned about the impact of the failed policies of his administration in person, he would begin to take this crisis seriously.

Every State is impacted by the security breakdown at the border, and something needs to be done before the situation becomes even more dangerous than it currently is.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Illinois.

HIGHLAND PARK SHOOTING

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, 2-year-old Aiden McCarthy was lying bloodied and pinned underneath his unconscious father when he was found—just a toddler, Aiden was still in diapers, had somehow lost one shoe and was down to just one blood-soaked sock, with scrapes across his body.

It was last Monday, July Fourth, and Aiden was rescued from the site of a massacre, from the site of the latest mass shooting that has marred our country and left scarred all those who bore witness to its senseless terror.

I was at a nearby parade in Illinois when I heard about the shooting. I rushed to the emergency operation center and was there the moment the police came in and told us that two Good Samaritans had found this young boy sheltered under his father's body.

When Aiden was rescued, he kept asking for his mom and his dad. But, tragically, horribly, we later learned that they were never going to be able to comfort him ever again. Both his mother and father were among the

seven people murdered during that Fourth of July parade shooting in Highland Park. Their names were Irina and Kevin McCarthy. And they, like so many of us, had spent that holiday morning eager to take pride in our country, eager to celebrate the freedom and goodness and greatness that has defined our Nation since its first breaths on that first July Fourth, eager to celebrate America at her best.

Instead, they experienced the very worst of it. They saw firsthand what can happen when a sick fealty to the gun lobby is prioritized over American lives. And Aiden is an orphan because of it.

I woke up today unable to get the image of 2-year-old Aiden's one bloodied sock out of my mind. I woke up, as I have every day since that day, unable to stop thinking about how his mom or his dad put on his diaper that morning, just like I have done thousands of times with my own two little girls.

I woke up thinking about how, when the first shots of that military-style rifle rang out, his parents' first thoughts must have been about saving him, shielding him.

So today, I come to the floor to say their names and the names of the five other victims, my constituents who should still be breathing at this very moment but aren't: Katherine Goldstein, Jacquelyn Sundheim, Stephen Straus, Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza, Eduardo Uvaldo, and Irina and Kevin McCarthy.

There are too many victims of preventable gun violence to name all of them here. In fact, gun violence is the largest killer of children under the age of 16 in this country—not disease, but the disease of gun violence. It happens in Buffalo, in Chicago, in Uvalde, in Newtown, in Pittsburgh, in DeKalb, in Virginia Beach, in El Paso, in two different Auroras, in Las Vegas. It happens in wealthy suburban communities, in low-income rural communities, and in urban areas across our Nation.

It happens everywhere in America but almost nowhere outside of this country. It happens so much here that we only hear about it in the national news when a large enough number of people are killed at one time and in one place.

Think about that. Every time gun violence occurs, someone decides whether or not the number murdered is worthy of column inches and breaking news graphics on TV. And, too often, the answer is no because there have been more mass shootings thus far in 2022 than there have been days in the year and because we, as a country, have grown numb.

We witnessed that just last week in Chicago, as over the holiday weekend, Chicago's death toll climbed even higher than the devastation seen in Highland Park. Yet there was no national outcry.

In Chicago's communities, gun violence is now viewed as all too common,

and kids can no longer be kids. They have all heard too many stories of toddlers in strollers killed by a stray bullet or parents murdered while picking up their own kids from school.

But these everyday gun deaths no longer garner the attention they demand. We have become desensitized, even as elementary schoolers' lives are being stolen and survivors' innocence are lost. Every gun death is a tragedy that can and should be prevented. This is a uniquely American disease, and it requires a national solution.

So I am here on the floor today to plead with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to help keep another toddler from having to cry out for his parents amidst gunshots and terror; to help stop another day of patriotism, another math class, another trip to the grocery store from turning into a living nightmare.

I plead with them to help prevent all that by passing the assault weapons ban, legislation that would block the further sale, transfer, manufacture, and importation of military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines for civilian use.

I spent 23 years in the Army. So I recognize a weapon of war when I see one. I know why you would need to use them, the power they wield, and what they can do to a human body.

I understand that the M4, the M16, and their civilian variants—known generically as AR-15 rifles—were designed for the battlefield. From their portability, rapid rates of fire, power and accuracy to their effective range, these weapons were designed to rip apart the human body so your enemy cannot get back up and fire back at you on the field of combat.

These are weapons of the battlefield and have no business being on our streets and in our schools. There is a reason why the parents in Uvalde had to submit DNA to identify their murdered children. These AR-15 style rifles fire small caliber ammunition at a velocity that can easily penetrate many kinds of body armor even at a distance. So when an unprotected child is shot with an AR-15 at close range, the results are horrific.

And as anyone who has ever carried an M4 into combat understands, the American people should not be misled into thinking that AR-15 rifles are safe for our communities or that a ban on fully automatic machine guns is sufficient to protect our children from the most dangerous weapons of war.

Mass shooters are hunting mothers in malls, fathers in theaters, and children in their schools. For that evil purpose, a semiautomatic rifle is the perfect weapon because it is lightweight, portable, and easy to load with high-capacity magazines.

It couples the speed of automatically chambering the next round after each shot with maximum accuracy—a combination designed to kill as many people as possible, as fast as possible, as efficiently as possible.

So the first thing I thought when I heard the audio of last week's tragedy was that it sounded like war because the last time I heard the sound of gunfire that rapid and that many rounds going off on the Fourth of July was when I was serving in Iraq. I never thought I would hear that on this holiday again, let alone here on U.S. soil.

And I live, like so many other moms, in daily fear that my own daughters will be forced to hear that nightmarish soundtrack of war in their own classrooms or their own local parade.

You know, a few weeks ago I went to talk to my daughters' class about Memorial Day. Both girls' teachers had asked me to come and explain the meaning of Memorial Day, to talk about the sacrifices of our troops, what we have done to safeguard our freedoms and rights as a nation, including, as the Constitution says, our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

As I was talking, I happened to look outside the window of my older girl's classroom, only to see my younger daughter walking in a line, following behind the other kids in her class in the middle of a shelter-in-place drill. And I watched as that little row of 3- and 4-year-olds crouched down as small as they could get, and my daughter, with her head against the wall, put her hands over her head, learning to protect herself should there be a mass shooting.

She is just 4 years old. And she was already being taught how to survive if someone with a weapon of war comes into the classroom where she is just beginning to learn her ABCs, believing that their right to fire assault rifles matters more than her right to make it to age 5.

What I felt was close to horror. And I know other parents have felt the same. I am far from the only mom who will hug their kids a little tighter while putting them to bed tonight, then spend hours looking up ballistic backpacks to protect my girls in case the worst-case scenario becomes reality. But the horrible truth is, even ballistic backpacks may not stop these rounds.

This week alone, hundreds of Illinoisans and survivors from other mass shootings were gathered at the Capitol. These people—mostly moms—are still recovering from major trauma. And they have jobs and childcare responsibilities and no experience lobbying Congress. Yet they made the trip to Washington, DC, because they know that their children's lives depend on it and because they are beyond furious at the lack of action to ban these weapons of war that have terrorized all of our communities.

What these moms want isn't impossible. It wouldn't even be that difficult if more folks would grow a conscience. These parents want us to do better for them, for their kids, for all those in Highland Park last week, and for every person who has so needlessly lost their

life to gun violence, whether in a mass shooting or in a tragedy involving a single bullet.

The folks at that parade last Monday were there to celebrate life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Seven of them will never be able to do so again.

We have to stop this. We have to end this cycle. And we can take a step towards doing so right now by getting these weapons of war off our streets and passing this bill immediately.

To anyone who says no, to anyone who objects to passing this bill, I want to know how you can show off taking pride in our country on a holiday, then turn your back on its citizens 1 week later. I want you to say all the names of the ever-growing list of victims of these preventable tragedies.

I want you to remember Aiden's pleas for his mom and dad, to think of the sounds of the gunshots that those children in Uvalde heard, to try to fathom the anguish of the parents whose teenagers are gunned down in senseless, everyday violence on our streets. I want you to explain to them why the dollars that you get from the NRA are worth their pain, their tears, their tragedy.

Please, I am asking, explain how that campaign contribution is worth this endless cycle of blood and death. Explain how your gun-lobbying, fattened campaign funds are worth another parent having to bury their first grader in their favorite pair of Converse sneakers.

Or, if you don't believe those checks are worth it, if you don't actually value your political self-interests more than those Americans' lives, then please join me in passing this bill. It is that simple.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

GENERAL MARK A. MILLEY

MR. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am here today in the Senate to sound the alarm about one of America's guiding principles—everybody knows about this—the constitutional principle of civilian control of our military, very much a cornerstone of our Republic.

This fundamental principle of self-government may have been in jeopardy during the final days of the Trump administration, but before I get to that, I will provide a historical context.

That principle became part of the American fabric on June 14, 1775, when the Congress of the Continental Congress appointed George Washington commander of the Continental Army. His commission ordered him to report to civilian authorities.

It specified:

You—

Meaning the new General Washington—

are punctually to observe such orders and directions, from time to time, as you shall receive from this, or a future Congress of these United Colonies.

Well, he followed that. At the war's end, General Washington gave this